

they made as a result of losses they have been going through. We are trying to help businesses—especially small businesses—compensate for the losses they have endured in recent years. Again, Republicans are in no rush to help them. Each day that goes by is a real hurt to small businesses.

The good news is that we are making progress on health care reform. We look forward to receiving, in a matter of days, the CBO analysis of the proposals for fixing our health system that is so broken. We only have 1 week before Veterans Day, November 11, and 1 week before the Thanksgiving recess after that, then we will have only 3½ weeks until Christmas, and we have unemployment insurance stalled by the Republicans; military construction, which we are trying to get done to allow for construction of military bases around America and the world where we have installations; Commerce-Justice-Science, which is an important piece of legislation, stalled for weeks.

It is interesting, we hear the Republicans come to the floor—I heard one of the most unbelievable statements yesterday. Senator STABENOW was over there, and she had a chart that showed that 85 times this year the Republicans have stopped either efforts to move forward on a bill or almost 60 times we have had to invoke cloture to stop filibusters. A Republican Senator came and said: Every one of those 85 was the result of our not being allowed amendments.

That doesn't pass the test of a kindergarten. A number of the things they have held up are nominations. We have scores of President Obama's nominations being held up. And with Commerce-Justice-Science, they say they have no amendments. Interesting. They have amendments that have been filed, and as soon as we get cloture, they will be able to debate those amendments and vote on them. But, no, that wasn't enough amendments. Maybe on that one they needed another ACORN amendment because they only had one. I think that would have added up to five or six. Maybe that would please them, another ACORN amendment.

Mr. DURBIN. Will the majority leader yield for a question?

Mr. REID. Yes.

Mr. DURBIN. I think the leader is onto something because it has been a full 2 weeks since we had an ACORN amendment on the floor. So it is clear we should move to one, which is of the highest priority of Republicans. I wonder if we need more ACORN amendments.

Mr. REID. Yes, maybe we should have agreed to a couple more ACORN amendments.

For those not following this, that is an organization that has done some tremendously good work around the country. I acknowledge they have some problems. That is why I agreed with my friend from Illinois, who called for

a complete investigation of ACORN. We agree that if they have done things that aren't right, they should be brought before the necessary tribunals or administrative agencies to look at that. But enough is enough. We recognize ACORN is not a perfect organization, but how much time do we need to spend on that? I also say that with nominations.

Here are things we are going to do before we have our Veterans Day break: unemployment, which is tied to first-time home buyers, and net operating loss. We are going to do military construction. We are going to finish Commerce-Justice-Science.

We are going to do nominations. We are going to do Judge David Hamilton, Seventh Circuit, who has been waiting since April. We have agreed to time agreements. Do you want an hour, 2 hours, 5 hours, 10 hours of debate? No, we don't want anything. Up-or-down vote. The Department of Justice—one of the key officials there has been held up for months, and that is Chris Schroeder. We are going to also complete Tara O'Toole. Here is a woman who is one of the most eminently qualified people in America to serve as science adviser to Secretary Napolitano. Her expertise is in a number of areas, including bioterrorism. She has written scores of articles, and she is also an expert in pandemics. Janet Napolitano, the Secretary, called me and said, "I am desperate for this woman to come and work with me." The country is not capable of doing all the things that need to be done as a result of not having this job filled. Again, they won't let us vote on her. They won't take a time agreement. This is so important that we will spend 2 days debating it if we can have a vote. But that is not good enough. No time is sufficient.

A 6-month highway extension—we would love to get that done so we can meet the demands of the winter in America and so construction can go forward.

Mr. President, the American people see what is taking place. It is so obvious, and it is not constructive.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will now be a period of morning business for 2 hours, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided and controlled between the 2 leaders or their designees, with the Republicans controlling the first half and the majority controlling the final half.

The Senator from Nebraska is recognized.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

Mr. JOHANNIS. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about health care. I want to focus my comments today, if I could, on specifically the Medicare cuts and the impact that will have across this great Nation, and also I would like too zero in on what those Medicare cuts mean for my home State, the great State of Nebraska.

Medicare is a program that is a source of health care for about 45 million Americans. As we all know, it is essentially a program for those who are 65 and older. It dates back a lot of years.

In my State, the State of Nebraska, there are 272,000 Nebraskans who are Medicare beneficiaries. As I have talked to them—and I have done town-hall meetings and roundtables all around the State—they are pleased with the health care they receive. If they get sick, they have this program, this Medicare Program, that is there for them.

I want to start out saying that I believe the current plan, which cuts Medicare and claims reform, is really off base with this population. The proposal says Medicare will be cut by over \$400 billion.

Let me, if I might, just walk down through the various programs that will be impacted within Medicare.

There will be a \$130 billion cut for the Medicare Advantage Program. If anybody has spent any time talking to senior citizens about Medicare Advantage, they will tell you they like this program.

Mr. President, \$45 billion will be cut from hospitals that care for recipients of Medicare; \$40 billion will be cut from home health agencies; \$14.6 billion will be cut from skilled nursing facilities; and nearly \$8 billion will be cut from hospice programs.

I suggest, very respectfully, that this health care reform, which will cut Medicare by over \$400 billion, is not an improvement. These cuts ultimately will compromise the ability of Medicare beneficiaries to access the care they need.

If I may spend a moment this morning to talk about the profound impacts this will have in Nebraska, the Medicare Advantage Program, as I said, will be impacted by about a \$130 billion cut. Nationally, there are 11 million seniors enrolled. One Democratic Senator described these cuts as "intolerable." I agree with that description. Mr. President, 35,000 Nebraskans have Medicare Advantage plans. The plans provide choice and options that people like.

The President said that "if you like your plan, you can keep it." And relative to the Medicare Advantage beneficiaries, he said you will get a plan that is "just as good."

The Finance Committee markup was very instructive on this issue. The CBO Director stated that those people who have Medicare Advantage "will see changes and reductions in their benefits."